

PARTNERS: RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION

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I am a sympathetic outsider to the issues of Australian religious education. My aim in this essay is to provide an international perspective for those issues. I will not attempt to present the whole international picture; I doubt that anybody can do that. Rather, I will try to describe some of the variations in religious education within the English-speaking world. And for further specificity I will concentrate on the relation of religious education to moral education.

I first describe two directions that religious education has taken during the last century, one illustrated by the United States and the other by England/Wales. I then note what has been implied for moral education in the context of these two meanings of religious education. Finally, I propose what seems to me the best form of partnership between religious and moral education, spelling out the effect in the lives of children, youth and adults.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: TWO DIRECTIONS

My proposed partnership is not exactly a blending of the two meanings of religious education; however, I have tried to learn from both of them and to bring elements of each of them into the partnership. I think that Australians are in a particularly good position to adopt the best elements of each meaning of religious education because Australia is one of the few places where both British and U.S. writings on religious education are read and discussed. What is adopted from these foreign sources can be combined with a distinctive Australian outlook on spirituality, morality, politics and education.

Ecumenical Process

The term *Religious education* can be found in the British American colonies as early as the seventeenth century, but its occasional use then was as a general reference to the church's education. The first reference I can find to *Religious education* as a distinct project is a Unitarian conference in 1872 (Report 1873). The term came to have a very distinct meaning in the early decades of the twentieth century. *Religious education* had two perceived strengths: 1) It could be an umbrella term for Protestant-Catholic-Jewish conversation about education 2) It could function as a bridge between religiously affiliated schools and the state (public) schools. (Coe 1920).

Despite the great hopes of the founders of the religious education movement, their ambitious aims were never (or have not yet been) realized. Catholics, Jews and conservative Protestants were suspicious of *Religious education* as being a cover for the liberal Protestantism that had emerged in the United States during the 1870s. In addition, the state school system remained an impenetrable and

distant land. The result was that religious education was generally identified with liberal Protestantism, although in the 1930s some Catholic educators had their own religious education movement, centered on a return to the New Testament.

Since the 1960s in the United States there has been some realignment and reform of religious education. After the decline of liberal Protestantism's religious education in the 1940s, the term was reinvigorated by the entrance of the Catholic church into ecumenical conversation. Religious education became a common language for liberal Catholics, liberal Protestants and liberal Jews - three groups that are a small minority in the United States. The conservative wings of the three religions and the personnel of the state school system are wary of anything called religious education. The group that now seems most comfortable with religious education is made up of Catholic educators. Unfortunately, they often use the term to refer to parish programs in contrast to Catholic schools. Not only does that usage exclude ecumenical conversation, it even obstructs educational dialogue within the Catholic church.

This century-long use of religious education may seem to illustrate nothing but the confusion of the United States in matters religious. The history is certainly not a strong one on which to build, but, at least for those of us in the United States, we have to remember the history lest we repeat the mistakes of the past. And there are positive elements as well. The Religious Education Association was intended from the beginning to be international. In practice that meant the United States and Canada, but even that much inclusion was an accomplishment. In recent years, a few Europeans and a few Australians have given more legitimacy to an international claim, especially in the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education.

The Religious Education Association was also from the beginning ecumenical in aim. While such an aim is commonplace today it was not so in the first decade of the twentieth century. As I noted above, this aim was not realized. Religious differences ran deeper than the founders of the movement assumed. And educational policies within each of the religions are among the most resistant to criticism and change. Nonetheless, the need for a religious conversation is greater today than it was a century ago, a conversation that would have to include more than the three American faiths. The entrance of Islam as a full-fledged partner will probably help to reshape the conversation.

The possibility of religious education providing a meeting point for religiously affiliated schools and state schools seems distant at best. That fact is not surprising, given the history of the near obsession to keep sectarian religion out of the schools. (Mann 1957). The educational question of teaching religion is treated under the peculiar language of church-state separation, a European phrase that should have been left in Europe. When the Supreme Court outlawed state-mandated religious exercises, it tried to affirm a legitimate place for religion

in the curriculum. The Court's language was immediately frozen into an artificial distinction between *teaching religion* and *teaching about religion*. (Piediscalzi 1972). The result is that a discussion which should involve the whole country is confined to the few people for whom this distinction makes sense. While religion infiltrates every aspect of life in the United States, religious education and the teaching of religion are assumed without question to be out of bounds for the country's school system. Eventually, the country will have to confront its rampant religiosity in a serious academic way but I do not think that day is imminent.

Classroom Subject

A different direction for religious education emerged in England in the 1940s. The term *religious education* was appropriated for the specific provisions of the Education Act of 1944. The Act defined religious education as comprised of two elements. The first element was worship: *The School day in every county school and in every voluntary school shall begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance at the school.* The second element of religious education was instruction: *Religious instruction shall be given in every county school and in every voluntary school* (Cox 1983, 4).

The driving force behind the passage of this bill was the great Archbishop William Temple. There is no doubt that Temple's motives were of the highest quality. He said that he wished to further the welfare of all people in a democratic state. Although the vast majority of the population was Christian, Temple's choice of *religious education* indicated an educational rather than an ecclesiastical purpose. Where did Temple find the term *religious education*? The most likely source is meetings of the International Missionary Council. At the 1928 meeting in Jerusalem, Temple referred to a *religious education* report, co-authored by Luther Weigle of Yale Divinity School. (Priestly 1991).

By the 1960s England was more religiously diverse than the authors of the 1944 Act could have envisioned. Not surprisingly, the provision of corporate worship ran into difficulties. Many people believe that religious worship is of its nature specific to one religious group. Many people also question whether school is the appropriate place for regular worship services. The provision for worship in the 1944 Act began to be criticized by writers and to be downplayed in the schools (Hull, 1975). The 1988 Education Act tried a compromise which said that the collective worship *shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.* This language, which was repeated in 1996, was not likely to stem criticism and opposition. (Hull 1989)

The other provision of the 1944 Act fared much better in the changing context of the last forty years. The simple injunction that *religious instruction shall be given* left the door open to creative reforms. Whereas in the United States *religious instruction* has a legal meaning practically equivalent to indoctrination, there was no intrinsic reason why *religious instruction* could not be used for a

properly academic study of religion and religions. Under the leadership of John Hull and his colleagues, a syllabus was produced that took account of religious diversity and the school's mission. Religious education is no longer to foster or nurture faith in any particular religion; it is to promote a sympathetic but critical understanding of religion. (Hull 1982, p. xiv)

The dissatisfaction with collective worship in the school has tended to throw the meaning of religious education on to the second provision, religious instruction. The result is that religious education (especially when referred to as RE) is spoken of as the subject of classroom instruction in the state school. The development of religious education curricula in England has been a service to teachers in many countries, including Australia (Crotty 1986). Compared to the United States, religious education in England and Wales is a more logical, professional and well-defined venture. The drawback is that religious education as the name of a classroom subject can produce unintended obstacles to conversation and cooperation with others whose interests are religious and/or educational.

MORAL EDUCATION

I turn at this point to Amoral education, particularly as it relates to the two directions of religious education. I think one could guess that where Religious education is a term that can have wide but ambiguous meaning, Amoral education is likely to be ambiguous as well. And these two processes may overlap or get connected in confusing ways. In contrast, where Religious education is a well-defined topic for the state-school curriculum, moral education is likely to be similarly defined as appropriate for classroom instruction. I will briefly recount the origin of the term moral education and then indicate its relation to the two directions of religious education.

Like Religious education, Amoral education is a term of the twentieth century. Until the end of the nineteenth century, placing Amoral before education would have seemed redundant. Education as a whole had a strongly moralizing character. Two developments in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century brought about a distinguishing of moral education from education. The first was the increasingly scientific and technical nature of the school's curriculum. The school's main work was thought to be properly amoral. The second reason was the perceived decline of the church's power to control the morals of working-class people and the poor. Government officials and intellectual leaders agreed on the need to keep society orderly. The church having been found wanting, sociologists and psychologists were cast as the shapers of society's morals.

Ambiguous Process

At its beginning, especially in France, a moral education movement was aggressively anti-church. In his 1901 book, Moral Education, Emile Durkheim

helped to establish the meaning of moral education. For Durkheim, this new education was pitted against the morality of revealed religion. (Durkheim 1961, 3). In the United States, moral education was understood to be outside church control but it was not necessarily anti-religious.

John Dewey was probably the most influential proponent of moral education in the United States. While Dewey rebelled against his Protestant upbringing, his work was suffused with religiosity. He gave the keynote address at the first meeting of the Religious Education Association in 1903. He remained firmly attached to what he called "the common faith," that peculiar blend of religion in the United States where the idea of America absorbs Catholic, Protestant and Jewish elements. (Dewey 1929). Today, even as sophisticated a scholar as Stephen Jay Gould writes that a distinction between religion and ethics is a quibble about the labels. He construes as fundamentally religious (literally, binding us together) all moral discourse on principles that might activate the ideal of universal fellowship of people. (Gould 1999).

Another feature of moral education in the United States is its identification with the school but not with classroom instruction. Durkheim had specified the school, rather than the family, as the most effective moral educator. The school as a moral community is to provide control of moral behavior. Dewey agreed with that point, having despaired of the family and the church as agents of education. While the school is given the task of moral education, the schoolteacher in the United States is warned away from trying to teach morality. Moral instruction is assumed to be indoctrination.

In the United States of the 1960s, the term moral education became almost synonymous with one name: Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg proclaimed his moral development to be a revolutionary new approach but actually it was in continuity with previous twentieth-century efforts. Kohlberg, like Dewey, wished to keep the church at a distance but his system was premised on a religious faith in liberal democracy. (Kohlberg 1979). The religious element fully surfaced in his search for a seventh stage that would religiously ground his six moral stages. His religious answer was a peculiar blend of Marcus Aurelius and Teilhard de Chardin. (Kohlberg 1981).

Kohlberg may have seemed to make the classroom center stage. However, he had no use for moral instruction or the teaching of ethics. Like his mentor, Jean Piaget, Kohlberg believed that the attempt to teach morality was an obstacle to moral development. (Piaget 1962). Kohlberg's famous dilemmas could be discussed in a classroom but they were not a subject for classroom instruction and could in fact be discussed anywhere. And when discussion of the dilemmas did not have the effect Kohlberg expected, he moved toward the just community as the moral educator. (Kohlberg 1980).

During the past decade Kohlberg's influence has waned. But so strong was the connection between Kohlberg and moral education that some of his opponents hesitate to call their approaches Amoral education. The most popular alternative has been called Acharacter education. It builds upon a long-standing obsession in the United States with character. Thomas Lickona is the person most responsible for the prevalence of the term. His books attempt a wide-sweeping inclusion of family, school and other institutions. (Lickona 1991). The movement has been friendly to religion in the generalized way that successful movements in the United States usually are. It also goes lightly over any place for classroom instruction in ethics or morals.

Like religious education in the United States, moral education is a broad but ambiguous movement. Despite anti-religious bias among many writers on moral education, the discussion never gets very far from religion. People who would like the United States secularized are always suspicious of moral education as surreptitiously religious. And indeed moral education is a place of convergence for religious groups. Where moral education in the United States is most lacking is in having any strong academic component. While the schools and their teachers are constantly criticized for failing at moral education, a place for moral instruction in the curriculum is seldom discussed.

Classroom Instruction

In England and in other countries where Areligious education@refers to a school subject, one is likely to find a parallel in moral education. That is, moral education is considered an appropriate topic for classroom instruction. In England moral education has been grouped with Apersonal, social@education. And although moral education is thought to be a relative of religious education, the two are kept separate. The purpose of religious education being to understand religion, moralizing about the students=lives is kept separate from religious education.

In many other countries where the British meaning of religious education has been influential, an even clearer line separates religious education and moral education. At the same time, both topics are strongly associated with the school=s curriculum. Moral education functions as an alternative to religious education in the curriculum.

Canada, with its various provincial arrangements, has illustrations of this relation between religious education and moral education. Despite powerful pressure from south of its border, Canada has maintained its distinct educational policies that show both British and United States influence (McKay 1969). Quebec is probably the most distinctive of the provinces in its approach to religious and moral education.

Quebec, like nearly all the Canadian provinces, has had two school systems. In Quebec=s case they were called the Catholic and the Protestant systems. The

Catholic system, mostly French speaking, has tended to use the catechetical language of the Catholic church. Religious instruction was likely to mean the teaching of Catholic doctrine. Religious education was not an ordinary term of reference. The Protestant schools generally served the English-speaking students. But as the population became religiously diverse, the Protestant schools have faced a crisis of how to deal with the religious element. I once encountered a Protestant school whose student body was eighty percent Jewish. The director of religious education for the Protestant schools said he did not get many objections in this Protestant school from the Jewish parents. The curriculum, concerned mainly with the Bible, had been adapted from the curriculum developed in England (Government 1984).

As In England, religious education has been a requirement for each student in the schools of Quebec. Two hours of instruction in either the Catholic or the Protestant curriculum was required. With curricula called Catholic and Protestant, the claim to objectivity and neutrality would be difficult to sustain. Students whose parents so requested could, as an alternative, take a course in Nonreligious moral education. In practice, few parents availed themselves of this option, suggesting that religious education has been done in an academically responsible manner.

Within the past year, government authorities have suggested that both Protestant and Catholic curricula be replaced by a course in World religions. That would be to ratify the direction of many Protestant schools. Many Catholic educators seem open to this idea. It would be an opportunity for the two school systems to work more closely than they have in the past. It would also make Quebec more closely aligned with some of its neighboring provinces.

PARTNERSHIP

I have described two tendencies in the relation of religious and moral education: one in which there are two lifelong processes that get mixed together, the other in which there are two curriculum subjects that are alternatives. Both tendencies have something of value to them. But to be consistent and effective, religious education and moral education have to be conceived as having a negotiable relation within a lifelong and lifewide education. I will first address the overall relation at the level of principle and then I will describe how the relation works at different ages of life.

My overall theme is that religious education and moral education should be distinct but not separate areas. I think that this principle can be accepted by both the devout Christian and the secular ethicist. In the world that has been shaped by western enlightenment, an educational approach to morality cannot begin with religious premises. But those people who act as if religion were either non-existent or morally negative are just as stubborn as the religious fundamentalists they ridicule. Many proponents of moral education sound like Voltaire or

Nietzsche fighting to dislodge the church's control of morality. It is time for a realignment of forces in battles over morality.

When one distinguishes among the religions in their relation to moral education the question becomes extremely complex. I think the most one can claim is that the fundamental moral orientations of the world's major religions are not incompatible. No proof is available for even this minimalist claim. But the starting point for interreligious dialogue has to be either an openness to cooperation or a distrust of otherness. Within an educational setting, I think one has to try the first attitude and discover conflicts as they may arise. Attempts to find a common moral code produce bland abstraction while undermining serious moral debate. John Hick is probably the foremost exponent of a moral code that cuts across the major religions. (Hick 1995). With due respect for Hick's extraordinary learning, I would still say that the human race is nowhere near being able to say what the world's religions morally agree upon.

What makes such a project difficult is that religions do not just have great variations in a code of morality. Each religion has its own approach to what morality is and how to get there. Buddhism, for example, is almost wholly a morality. It exists as practices with no superstructure of religious beliefs. Islam and Judaism are structurally similar and interpret morality as commandments. About one-tenth of the Qur'an's verses are direct commands, which makes it a document different in kind from the New Testament. Christianity is from this perspective the religion least overtly moral. Its founding document has parables, sayings, announcements and prophecies but few direct commands to action.

A lifelong framework for the relation of religious education and moral education would have the following structure: 1) In early childhood moral and religious education blur together. The child does not distinguish these two realms and the adult teacher need not worry about the two processes overlapping. 2) Starting at about age five or six years, the young person needs to have some distinction between religious education and moral education. This difference, brought out in school courses, may result in a sharp separation by the time of early adulthood 3) At whatever age the person finds an integral way of life, religious education and moral education flow together as distinct but not separate elements in life. The person continues to learn, even in old age, from a dialogical partnership of morality and religion.

Childhood

Childhood is a more ambiguous term than it is usually assumed to be. For example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone under eighteen-years-old. A similar assumption is made in adult education literature that regularly contrasts child and adult learning styles. However, in most contexts, to address a seventeen-year-old as a child would be insulting. At the other end of the age span, a child may or may not include

infancy. When writers in religious education say that the church has been more concerned with children than adults, they are not usually thinking of early childhood.

Education is a lifelong process that begins no later than birth. While most people pay lip service to this principle, journals of education and educational experts routinely speak as if real education begins at school age. This problem is especially severe in regard to both moral and religious education. The pre-school child does not have a religion. That is, he or she does not know the beliefs of any one religion nor can the child practice the tenets of a religion. In moral matters, we do not hold the child morally responsible until the age of five or six. The requirements for performing either virtuous or sinful acts are missing. Thus, Jean Piaget's description of the child as pre-moral seldom raises an objection. (Piaget 1969)

If we link religious and moral education we might better recognize that the child's attitudes are largely determined before the age of six. The young child cannot exercise rational judgments and free decisions but the child's fundamental orientation is set by the care that he or she receives. Human rationality is certainly important to morality but it is badly understood without the context of infancy and nonhuman animals. The dependency of childhood embodies a central characteristic of human life. A healthy adult can easily forget this centrality of dependence, but in the space of a few seconds an accident can become a brutal reminder.

Women seem to have a greater sense of this dependence than men. Until recently, books on ethics were written almost exclusively by men. Now feminist ethics has brought out the fact that care comes before reason in human life. (Gilligan 1982). Unfortunately, the reform of ethics seems stuck with a division between justice for men and care for women. If we were to start with lifelong moral education and a moral education open to religion, we would recognize that care is needed for boys and girls, men and women. (Tronto 1993). Without care none of us would get through the first two weeks of life. The quality of that care throughout the early years stays with us for a lifetime.

Alisdair McIntyre has written brilliantly on this theme of dependence and the resulting need for the provision of direction and care (McIntyre 1999). Drawing upon Aristotle and Aquinas, McIntyre highlights the significance of infancy as well as the relation to our closest animal kin (dolphin, chimp, horse, dog, cat). McIntyre rightly compares the training of animals and the training of a child, neither of which succeed by a mechanical imposition of behavior. It was Descartes who thought that animals were mechanisms without feelings or judgment (Descartes 1991). The last half century has seen a return to the ancient wisdom that nonhuman animals are dialogical partners with humans. The training of a horse or a young child should be done without violence. (Roberts 1999). The horse and the child are responsive creatures. They learn to behave by kind

gestures, precise commands and patient words from the side of the human teacher. Something that McIntyre does not note is the importance of a child's interaction with animals for its education, both moral and religious.

Each of the religions has its own convictions about particular beliefs and rituals that the growing child should learn. Underlying that difference, however, is a respect for the smallest child who has her or his own life from the creator and is not the possession of any adult. Whatever specific beliefs and practices the child acquires can be given and received as a gift. Later in life there will be occasion to examine these beliefs and practices. But everyone starts out in life with prejudices, that is, judgments already formed by previous generations. Hans Gadamer has written persuasively of the positive value of prejudice. (Gadamer 1982). We may eventually conclude that some of our prejudices are indefensible, but neither education nor religion is possible without prejudices. Religion's most obvious analog is language. We may wish that the child should be able to speak with all humanity but first the child has to learn the limited language of English, or German, or Hindi. And the child learns to speak a particular language neither by someone forcibly imposing it or by being given a menu of languages to choose from. The infant learns to speak by being spoken to and by participating in the particular rituals of a linguistic community.

Within the ethos of democratic freedom, many people feel uneasy about passing on their own beliefs and practices to the small child. A recent cartoon in The New Yorker showed parents saying to their young child: "There's Catholic, Protestant or Jewish. Do any of those interest you?" The question is comical because the young child is not capable of knowing what such choice means. The cartoon nonetheless touches that chord of unease that parents and guardians feel. But the young person's ability to choose intelligently is enhanced if parents have provided their own beliefs and practices to the child. The only real alternative is confusion.

Youth

Although a child needs to be given a religious and moral direction that is determined by a few adults, there inevitably comes a time in life when that approach is no longer sufficient. The young person begins to question the customs, habits and rules which were previously accepted as the obvious way to live. Not so long ago this age of questioning and rebelling was identified with the teenage years. The adolescent (one becoming adult) was the teenager. These days adolescence may extend from six to thirty years of age. The greater frankness in television, movies, music and adult conversation presses the question of authority upon any child who can form abstract judgments. The previous assumption that this questioning does not start until age twelve or thirteen was probably always a wishful illusion. As Piaget found in his studies of children's moral judgments, the serious questioning of society's rules begins as early as age eight or nine. (Piaget 1962, xx)

The extension of adolescence into the twenties is mostly a function of economics. Particularly for young people who study in graduate or professional schools, economic independence is delayed well into the twenties. In the United States their independence is further delayed by years of paying back student loans. Whether or not it was so intended, the system of student indebtedness has become society's way to control young people. Even a half century ago when Erik Erikson described adolescence as a *Amoratorium*, this period of life was extended well beyond the age when young people were physically able to get a job and start a family. (Erikson 1968). Today, the common practice of young people living at home with parents can create new strains between the generations. The rebellion against the moral and religious education of childhood is lengthened in time and perhaps in intensity.

It does no good simply to decry this extended adolescence. The positive side of this development is that young people have a longer time to come to an understanding of their religious and moral lives. It may have once seemed possible and desirable to protect young people from moral and religious otherness. Adults may still fear the effect of foreign perspectives on the young, but the diversity of religious belief and moral behavior can be perceived as an advantage and an opportunity. Not that the child of six is ready for a full menu of human possibilities. But the child between ages six and twelve has to be instructed by an adult who conveys the attitude: this is the truth as I know it and this truth is to be valued, but there are other truths to which you have to be receptive.

This period of extended adolescence is dominated by the school form of education. Moral education and religious education find an appropriate place in the classroom. Each of them needs a name for the part of them that fits into the classroom curriculum. I think that the best name for the classroom contribution to moral education is ethics. Admittedly, there is an ambiguity in this term that has been present since the time of Aristotle. *Æthics@* can mean the practice of a way of life, as well as the philosophical and scientific study of such practices. The nineteenth century generally referred to *Amoral philosophy*, a term not used much in academic circles. In the twentieth century, *Æthics@* became the standard academic term.

The term *Æreligion@* has a parallel but more serious ambiguity. *ÆReligion@* refers to the practice of a way of life; it can also be used for the study of those practices that are described as religious. While the academic meaning of *Æethics@* is fairly easy to stipulate, there is often confusion and suspicion when one advocates putting religion into school. People try to avoid this problem by using convoluted phrases, such as teaching religious studies or teaching religious education. Perhaps this tactic is necessary to get a place in the curriculum at all. But the awkward phrasing undercuts religion being taken as seriously as mathematics, biology or physics. As it is, religious education as the name of what is addressed

in the classroom is more closely associated with driver education, physical education or drug education, that is, topics of questionable academic standing.

A recent book, Teaching Sex (Moran 2000) recounts the disappointing history of sex education in the schools. The author would like to see sex education integrated into a broader effort to train youthful imagination, taste and judgment. That is, he would like to move sex education from health and physical education into English and history classes. But I think one would then have to stop talking about sex education for the topic taught in school. A child's sexual education should include units in the biology, history and literature curricula. If there is need for a course that would bring together these elements of sexual education, it would be late in the curriculum of the secondary school. I do not have the name for such a course but making sex the object of instruction does not solve the problem. Sex would be even more ambiguous than religion.

The point of such comparison is to indicate a broader curriculum problem than that of religion. The comparison may also indicate the direction in which religion should move. The religion teacher has natural alliances with the history, literature and social science teachers. In the early grades, religion would best be taught not as a separate subject but as a unit or units within other subjects. Probably by the time of secondary school, religion and ethics deserve their places as courses in the curriculum.

Religion and ethics as classroom subjects are parallel and separable. That religion has ethical dimensions no one doubts but what is most appropriate at this stage is emphasis on the intellectual excitement which the study of religion can generate. A heavy moralizing on religion (especially in matters of sex) can be guilt-inducing but that is eventually self-defeating. Similarly, ethics has religious connections. But the ultimate dependence of ethical systems on religious premises and religious motivation should not be short-circuited. The anti-religious (especially anti-Christian) bias of modern ethics can be resisted without baptizing the ethics course. Perhaps it is naive to expect that an ethics teacher in a church-related school would function with an autonomy that would allow serious challenges of church doctrine and practice. It is certainly not too much to expect such autonomy at the college and university level. If students are to respect an ethics course, its conclusions cannot always be the same as what is found in moral theology books.

If religion and ethics were so situated in a religiously affiliated school, would not the school lose its mission? For example, should not a Catholic school be Catholic in all respects and especially in teaching Catholic doctrine? This question is a complicated one that cannot be fully answered here. However, I would note two things: First, a Catholic school carries out its mission by the atmosphere it creates for students, by the example of the faculty and administrators, and by the attitude to teaching and learning that is manifest in the way it approaches every subject. Second, one should expect that the contents of

a religion course in a Catholic school will differ from that of a course in a Jewish school. The Catholic school will more likely have a course on sacraments, the Jewish school on Torah (though the reverse is academically possible). What makes speech about sacraments a religion course rather than catechesis or homily is the manner of study and the aim of the teaching. Looking at the sacraments from historical, social and psychological perspectives and as practices that can be intellectually grasped may not seem to contribute to the religious mission of the secondary school or college. However, for religious education as a lifelong journey respect for intellectual understanding is indispensable.

Adults

The term adult may simply refer to a person's age. But we often use *Adult* as an evaluative term. *Adult* refers to psychological, social, moral and religious maturity. While *Adolescent* means becoming adult, *Adult* means to have reached the destination of ripeness and maturity. But perhaps we never fully leave adolescence. The Greek saying that no one is happy until dead might be reformulated as no one is adult until his or her dying ratifies the life that is now complete. We can speak, however, of adulthood as embodied to varying degrees.

Adulthood, in this ideal sense, is marked by a reemergence of the childlike. The qualities of simplicity, spontaneity and sympathy describe both the child and the adult. What intervenes is rational and critical thinking that needs to be integrated within adult life. The adult does not reject scientific thought and technical tools but they have to be placed at the service of life.

In adulthood, as in childhood, religious and moral educations overlap and blend together. The difference is that the adult can distinguish the two when necessary but does not always find the need to do so. One's religious education points the way to moral living, and one's moral education opens backward and forward, below and above, to the religious dimension of life. The quality of simplicity means that one does not usually have to struggle to do the right thing. One has learned to abide by a disciplined conscience.

Aristotle believed that the purpose of education is that we should learn to love what is good. (Aristotle 1976, 1080a15). When we are young, each of our senses seeks what is satisfying to it. Our appetites do not need thwarting but they do need governing from the center. An adult is someone who has reached an effective, democratic form of government that allows progress toward what is good for the whole organism. For example, one element in this process is diet. A child's natural tastes, if they were not distorted by the food industry and advertising, would be a good guide to diet. But we all make mistakes along the way, taking the wrong things or wrong amounts of things into our diets. Adulthood is marked by liking what is good for us, eating broccoli or carrots

because we appreciate the taste. Neither one's diet nor the rest of morality can be properly directed by doing what is distasteful. Wisdom means a taste for what is good.

The adult qualities referred to above - simplicity, spontaneity, sympathy - cut across most if not all religions. Each religion stresses the interdependence of all life, a reliance on some reality greater than the human, and a special responsibility to care for the most fragile and vulnerable of human lives. The older one gets the simpler the picture becomes.

While the moral ideal may be similar for Buddhist and Christian, Muslim and Jew, there are differences in the way the ideal is formulated and in the roads that get there. I noted that a child's moral formation would differ in Christian and Jewish homes. In adulthood, the differences are more pronounced and one can trace the differences through the formative elements. For example, Christianity makes a moral claim that sets it off from Judaism and Islam. Jews and Muslims might agree that Christianity holds out a high moral idea but they see this moral idealism as a problem.

Christians, too, have to recognize that an exalted morality is a danger as well as a call to greatness. What perhaps began to become clear in the twentieth century is that Christianity can be fully lived out only by adults. Implicit in nineteenth-century versions of Christianity was a morality of teenage conversion. Indeed, adolescence was conceived of as a religious movement before being defined as a stage of psychological development. Jesus' invitation to be ready to lay down one's life is better addressed to forty-year-olds than to fifteen-year-olds. Humans ought not to be asked to sacrifice their lives before they have a chance to experience that life.

I said earlier that Christianity seems not to be a very moral religion in that its founding document has almost no direct commands. This characteristic can be a moral weakness or it can be turned into a moral strength. New Testament morality can be extremely simple for those whose lives have reached simplicity. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (Jn 15:12). But the simple is not the easy and the road to simplicity is filled with startling paradoxes. In order to find one's life one must be ready to give up one's life. The alternative - to preserve, cultivate and concentrate on oneself - leads to boredom and frustration.

A few writers stubbornly insist that selfishness is the road to individual happiness and the common good (Russell 1930). But most writers on ethics have to admit that a religious ideal or some substitute for it is needed if society is to exist at all. The world functions because some people do more than what is required of them. They give without seeking a return; they forgive without seeking vengeance. If everyone took an eye for an eye, wrote Gandhi, the world would

soon be blind. The Christian finds the ideal of a non-symmetric response to violence in the Sermon on the Mount.

The attempt in modern ethics to grasp this ideal is found in the term Altruism. But the term itself and the ideal it names represent a fundamental misunderstanding of morality. Altruism, a term invented in the 1850s, is the other side of the coin from selfishness. Its time of origin relates it on the one hand to modern professions and on the other hand to evolutionary biology. Books on professional ethics regularly claim that professionals should be altruistic - choosing the good of the other instead of one's own good. The professional who tries to follow such advice either finds it impossible to do or else cloaks his or her real motives. Not surprisingly, modern professions generate quite a bit of cynicism and a large literature on the professions as power-grabbing ideologies. (Larson 1977).

Contemporary writing on evolutionary ethics assumes that morality equals altruism (Richards 1987). Authors seem unaware that morality was discussed for thousands of years without the term altruism. These days there are optimistic arguments that humans can act altruistically, although the basis for such optimism remains shaky in a world of selfish genes (Ridley 1996). Various avenues are tried to explain non-selfish behavior on the part of saints, friends and good neighbors. (Wilson 1978).

The confusion in this approach is that selfish/altruistic is an inadequate image of the range of human behavior. The Bible does not enjoin the Jew or Christian to love thy neighbor instead of oneself; the command is to love thy neighbor as thyself. Furthermore, the Bible places this command second to the more embracing command to love God. The love of God is first a love from God. The love of neighbor - the one who is close but is not necessarily a friend - is possible because it is the love from God that is being shared. The good we do to friend or enemy is not a giving up of our possessions but the securing of our good precisely in the sharing of it. The language of selfish versus altruistic is simply in a different universe.

In the Christian community, the moral life of the adult needs regular reminding of the beatitudes, and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Homilies, reading, discussion groups and occasional courses can continue throughout life, even in nursing homes. The interaction of older adults with both young children and teenagers is central to the moral and religious education of every religious community. The opportunities for this interaction should be available so that the bond between older adults on one side and children and youth on the other side can provide the rich intergenerational context in which younger adults can mature in their religious and moral lives.

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